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THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPÆDIA

HENRY C. SHELDON

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Theological Encyclopædia

THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPÆDIA

A Brief Account of the Organism and Literature of Theology

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PREFACE

EXPERIENCE of the difficulty of employing an elaborate treatise on Theological Encyclopædia in class work led the writer about ten years ago to prepare, for private use, a brief sketch of the organism of theology. A second ground for limitation to the brief sketch was the conviction that the treatment of the subject-matter of the various branches of theology ought to be left to the several departments of theological instruction; that, indeed, so far as class work is concerned, an attempt to anticipate, with outlines of subject-matter, the fuller exposition which belongs to the departments is very much of a superfluity and involves besides some risk of blunting the edge of interest in the mind of the student. The extended work in Theological Encyclopædia is doubtless capable of fulfilling a useful function, but it fulfills that function best when employed

(after a preliminary perusal) as a book of reference.

The student who is connected with a well-equipped school of theology may be supposed to have at command suitable means of guidance in the great field of theological study. To one who is deprived of the benefit of such connection some practical suggestions may be serviceable. Even on reading a brief treatise, like that which follows, with its catalogue of theological branches and its appended book-lists, some sense of bewilderment may overtake him. Having in mind, then, the needs of the student who is left very largely to his own resources, we make bold to offer this list of advices: (1) In the first stage of theological study a preponderant attention may properly be given to the Biblical branches. Every student needs to familiarize himself with a good book on Introduction to each Testament. Every student needs also to familiarize himself with a good book on the Biblical Theology of the Old Testament and the New Testament respectively. When the debt to these two classes of works has been paid the detailed exegetical study of some of the Biblical books most vitally related to the Christian faith may follow. (2) In making choice

of books, especially in the field of Biblical study, it is a matter of prudence to begin with those which do not stand at the extreme, whether of conservatism or of liberalism. There is a just presumption that the scholarship of the past has achieved something worth while, and that some deference is due to the consensus, or the approximation to a consensus, which it may have wrought out. On the other hand, there is a just presumption that scholarly industry through the ages must be able to lay hold upon some new data and gain some improved points of view. Putting the two presumptions together, we are driven to the conclusion that the student in the primary stage simply shows reasonable discretion in giving the preference to books which escape either extreme. Of course the one who gives himself to extensive investigation, and aims at mastership in a given department, may properly feel that the burden is upon him not to pass by any order of books which promises even a small addition to information and insight. Quite obviously, however, what is incumbent upon the expert is not a rule for the one who is at the beginning of the ways. (3) The above principle of selection may be applied with eminent propriety to the choice

of a Dictionary of the Bible—a handy instrumentality which the earnest student can not fail to appreciate. (4) In the department of Historical Theology the student will find it of advantage to have under his hand a treatise on Church History which is neither so condensed as to be arid nor so extensive as to be wearisome. After utilizing a work of this description he will find historical monographs, or books devoted to particular themes, exceedingly fruitful of interest and profit. (5) In preparation for the study of Systematic Theology, or as an accompaniment of such study, the faithful use of a well-constructed book on the History of Christian Doctrine is of first-class importance. Nothing affords a better safeguard against precipitancy and onesidedness in theology than a thorough review of the effort at doctrinal construction through the centuries. (6) The student will proceed wisely in giving good heed to the demand for proportion in his attention to the branches belonging to Practical Theology. The time has not gone by when it will do to be at all lax in seizing every means of pulpit efficiency. But the time has gone by when the shepherd of souls can be excused from studying and applying the most eligible plans for leading

childhood and youth into the ways of religion. The time has also gone by when the themes of world-evangelization and of social amelioration can be reckoned outside the pale of pastoral interest. (7) The selection of books for study or perusal is much too vital a matter to be treated in a haphazard or easy-going fashion. The student needs and is entitled to ask advice from the best available sources. He should feel free, yea under obligation to himself and to the Church, to make full inquiry. Among those to whom inquiries may properly be addressed are the professors in the theological schools. We have no license to speak for the professors, but we surmise that they esteem it a part of their vocation to give careful and kindly heed to all inquiries concerning books, and especially concerning books that belong to their respective departments of instruction.

Boston University, January, 1911.

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Theological Encyclopædia

CHAPTER I

Consideration of Terms

The term "Encyclopædia" is significant of a comprehensive summary of knowledge. "Theological Encyclopdædia" is therefore naturally understood to mean a comprehensive summary of theological knowledge. In the unrestricted sense the title means just that. But it is possible to distinguish between matter and form, and to construct an encyclopædia which devotes a principal, not to say an exclusive attention to the latter. A Theological Encyclopædia devised on this plan, instead of giving an epitome of the subject-matter of theology, would be content to discriminate the various branches of theological study, to describe their scope and function, and to indicate their mutual relations. The accomplishment of this task of discrimination and description might indeed involve some reference to subject-mat-

ter, but the reference would be brief and incidental.

It is with Theological Encyclopædia in this formal signification that we have to deal. We understand thereby such a general introduction to theology as undertakes to set forth in order the various branches of theological study, to define their function and scope, and to indicate their proper relations to one another.

In order to avoid ambiguity it is necessary to determine in what sense the term "theological," as used in the title, is to be understood. Various questions may be asked respecting the scope of theology. For instance, the question may be raised whether "natural theology" so-called—that is, the body of conclusions, having more or less of a theological significance, which may be derived from an examination of the works of God in nature—is to be included. To this inquiry an affirmative answer is undoubtedly to be given, in so far as the presumption is admitted that the facts of the natural world have any bearing upon theological questions. Anything that throws light upon those questions, or comes into distinct relation with them, falls within the province of theology. It does not follow,

however, that a complete circle of theological studies must include a branch set off by itself under the name of Natural Theology. It may be that all the subject-matter which that title is made to cover can be taken up with entire convenience and propriety in the universally recognized branches, such as Apologetics and Dogmatics. In our view this is the case. While it may be worth while that books should be written on the theme of natural theology, just as it may be worth while to award a monographic treatment to many minor divisions of the great field of theology, there is only moderate ground for rating natural theology as a distinct theological discipline.

A second question on the scope of the term theology relates to the disposition of the non-Christian religions. How far, if at all, is the ground which they cover to be regarded as included in the theological domain? Evidently it is needful to impose here very considerable restrictions. However the matter may appear to a non-Christian thinker, the Christian theologian can but regard the Christian religion as ultimate. It is appropriate therefore to his point of view to give a secondary consideration to the non-Christian re-

ligions. He needs to draw upon them only as they have affected the history of his own religion, or as they furnish materials illustrative or corroborative of one or another element which claims recognition in his own religious system. He treats them in a manner consistent with his own standpoint when he simply accords them a place in branches auxiliary to the main divisions of Christian theology. In so far as they have modified Christian history they make matter for a branch auxiliary to Historical Theology. In so far as they supply data for a philosophy of religion they help to constitute a branch auxiliary to Systematic Theology. In so far as they serve to illustrate the superiority of Christianity, and thus are adapted to minister to its defense, their study can be rated as auxiliary to Apologetics.

A third question relative to the province of theology concerns its relation to philosophy. The latter may be defined as an attempt to get at ultimate truth by rational processes. Theology on its constructive side attempts, within limits, the same thing. It attempts to get at ultimate truth, in so far as that truth has religious worth or significence. Theology may enter upon its task with a more positive

presumption in favor of the authority of written revelation than belongs to the philosophical starting-point. Still theology is not obligated to treat that presumption as a mere matter of course. On the contrary it has occasion to treat it as a subject for rational inspection and confirmation. In connection with any great doctrinal theme it is interested to review all the available data, those of rational thinking included. It follows, therefore, that philosophical method must serve as an important instrumentality of theology. The theologian in the proper execution of his task must philosophize. A good discretion may make him wary about tying himself closely to any one historic system or school of philosophy; but he will not rate lightly the demand to utilize the best fruits of the philosophical thinking of the past centuries. It is not to be overlooked, however, that recourse to philosophical method and to philosophical data does not necessarily imply that a distinct standing is to be given to philosophy within the group of theological studies. It strikes us that the debt is paid to this branch when, on the one hand, the best approved substance of philosophy is wrought into the texture of Dogmatics, and on the other hand the History of

Philosophy is given a prominent place among the studies auxiliary to the History of Christian Doctrine.

Questions might also be raised as to whether it comes within the scope of theology to take account of one or another science. It will be enough to state here two maxims which must shape the answer to this order of questions: (1) Theology is entitled and obligated to make use of any sort of subject-matter that throws light upon any of its themes. (2) It is not best to overcrowd the list of theological studies by giving a distinct place in that list to any branches which are not to a very noticeable degree implicated with matters religious or theological.

Advancing to a positive statement, we may say that theology in the Christian sense is the science of the Christian religion, and as such includes in its scope all the branches which serve for the exposition of the Christian religion, as respects its oracles, its history, its doctrinal content, and the leading applications of its principles to life. In addition to the branches which come clearly within its limits it may admit, under the category of auxiliaries, a few whose subject-matter has an obvi-

ous connection with religious facts and problems.[1]

To speak, as we have just done, of theology as a science may not be quite in keeping with judgments which have sometimes been rendered. It is nevertheless a perfectly warrantable way of speaking. One or another system of theology, as actually developed, may have slight claim to be regarded as scientific. But the subject-matter of theology is just as capable of orderly representation as is any other subject-matter; it also furnishes grounds for just as reliable inductions as does the subject-matter of most of the sciences. One who is free to speak of the science of geology, or biology, or medicine should have no hesitation to speak of the science of theology. In any one of these sciences the subject-matter shades off into the mysterious; but the implication

[1] As respects the meaning of religion in general, it is to be observed that it has both a subjective and an objective aspect. On the one hand it denotes man's disposition to believe in the existence of a higher power, his feeling of dependence upon and obligation toward that power, and his impulse to worship the same. On the other hand it denotes the rites, institutions, and doctrines which give expression to the native tendency to believe, to the sense of dependence and obligation, and to the impulse to worship. Into its realization in any worthy degree the whole nature of man enters—his feeling, his will, and his intellect.

with mystery does not nullify the title to a scientific character. It is largely characteristic of the sciences that, alongside a domain of certainty, they include areas which can claim at best only a high degree of probability.

As dealing with a subject-matter objectively furnished, theology ranks as a positive science. This characteristic, however, does not place it in contrast with other branches of knowledge, except pure mathematics. Sometimes an antithesis has been drawn between theology and philosophy, as though the one belonged to the positive and the other to the speculative order. But surely it is only a limited contrast which can be affirmed here. A philosophy which takes no serious account of the actual world and of actual human history, which attempts to build up a system of truth out of sheer notions, is not likely to be worth much. Generally speaking the positive and the speculative are interwoven in the branches of human knowledge. Even the physical sciences have their working hypotheses, that is speculative elements conjoined with the objectively furnished matter. In pure mathematics alone (including purely formal logic as being conformed to mathematical principles), where only ideal quantities come into the account,

is the whole subject-matter drawn out from pure mental conceptions.

Theology evidently constitutes a study of vast extent and profound interest. The facts and truths with which it more directly deals are the deepest in man's being and the highest above the human plane. It utilizes the most significant findings of a large proportion of the branches of learning. It takes into consideration the greatest treasures of past history, and gathers up the data for the farthest possible outlook into future destiny. It gives ample room for speculative acumen, but at the same time includes the themes that are of all the most intensely practical. For a combination of intellectual interests and heart interests there is no study that surpasses theology.

CHAPTER II

Questions of Classification or Distribution

In the execution of its task of distributing the subject-matter of the great field which it surveys, Theological Encyclopædia encounters certain difficulties. Obviously the distribution ought to be according to a simple, comprehensive, and self-consistent scheme. It requires, however, not a little thought to determine what scheme best answers to this description. Various questions, for example, may be raised as to the proper order of theological branches. Concerning several of them an inquiry may be propounded as to which is antecedent and which consequent. If on the one hand archæology prepares the way for successful Biblical study, on the other hand Biblical study is to a large extent just that which furnishes the materials of archæology. If on the one hand a grasp of his-

tory facilitates exegesis, on the other exegesis is needed to gain trustworthy matter for history. If on the one hand the student who sets out to interpret the Bible needs to be guided by hermeneutical maxims, on the other a knowledge of the real nature of the Bible seems to be a necessary antecedent to the forming of hermeneutical maxims. If on the one hand one needs to be assured in general of the truth of the Christian system before he undertakes to represent that system, and so has occasion to preface dogmatics with apologetics, on the other hand the detailed study of the Christian system seems to be a needed preparation for its best defense, and so to require that dogmatics should precede apologetics. Instances like these may serve to apprise us that arrangement is in part dependent upon something else than intrinsic relationships, namely, upon the relative point of view. Which of two branches shall be made subordinate to the other depends often upon the end immediately contemplated. For example, if exegesis or detailed interpretation is the end in view, then history, so far as it is capable of assisting the process of interpretation, is subordinate to exegesis. On the contrary, if history is the end in view, then exegesis, so far as it furnishes

grounds for historical judgments, is subordinated to history. This is not saying that a sufficient warrant may not be found in intrinsic relationships for making some branches antecedent to others. The proper conclusion is that the relative point of view must be admitted as an appreciable factor in the determination of the order of various branches. On some of the minor points of arrangement there are no very decisive grounds of decision.

As respects main divisions it is difficult to improve on the fourfold scheme advocated by Hagenbach and others, according to which the theological domain is divided between Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology. The choice, it seems to us, lies between this scheme and the moderately different one of Heinrici. In the latter a general distinction is made between "historical" and "normative" branches, the former being made to cover the specifically Biblical branches as well as the history of Christianity since Biblical times, and the latter including as principal subdivisions Systematic Theology and Practical Theology. The idea of the historical branches is to exhibit the whole deposit of religious truth and fact; the idea of the normative branches is to

afford means of guidance in religious teaching and work. The scheme of Wernle may be regarded as being in substantial accord with that of Heinrici, since he recognizes but three grand divisions, the Historical, the Systematic, and the Practical, and includes the Biblical studies under the first of these. In point of simplicity and logical consistency something can be said for this plan. Still it is open to the objection that it does not directly emphasize the distinctive place which belongs to the Bible as a pre-eminent source of Christian teaching. On the whole, we do not find sufficient ground for exchanging the scheme of Hagenbach for the competing scheme.

Some recent writers have thought it appropriate to style the first grand division the Biblical rather than the Exegetical. This terminology affords a certain advantage in disposing of such branches as Biblical History and Biblical Theology. It enables one to place them with other purely Biblical branches in a common division. But this gain is just about counterbalanced. If one department is rounded out another is curtailed. Why should Historical Theology be excluded from the Biblical domain? Surely the term in itself suggests no exclusive attention to the Chris-

tian as opposed to the Jewish Church. It seems just as well, therefore, to retain the term exegetical, and to let the two branches in question find a place in the historical department under the denomination of historical branches specifically prepared for by exegetical study. Should one prefer the term "Biblical" to designate the first main division, he would of course need to avoid conjoining it with "theology" in that relation, since otherwise he would have occasion to put a double sense into the term "Biblical Theology."

CHAPTER III

Exegetical Theology

Since the Bible affords the starting-point for a consideration of the history of Christianity, the fundamental basis for doctrinal construction, and the principles which ought to govern practical religious endeavor, an understanding of the contents of the Bible appears as the primary demand of theology. Hence Exegetical Theology, the object of which is to secure this understanding, has an excellent title to be ranked as the first main division of theological science. By the general consent of theologians this division is made to include, besides exegesis proper, a number of branches which serve as aids in the work of interpretation.

A measurably complete list of the several parts of Exegetical Theology may be made as follows: (1) Biblical Philology or Linguistics. (2) Biblical Archæology. (3) Canonics. (4) Biblical Criticism: (a) textual, (b)

literary and historical. (5) Biblical Introduction or Isagogics. (6) Hermeneutics. (7) Exegesis, or the detailed interpretation of the Scriptures. Respecting these branches it is not claimed that they represent in every instance an exclusive province of study, but only that they have fairly determinate outlines, though two or more of them may include some common territory.

1. Biblical Philology stands for the study of the Biblical languages. In the broader sense it includes also the languages so far cognate with the Biblical as to be able to make a distinct contribution to the understanding and appreciation of the peculiarities of the same. Whatever may be requisite for the ordinary pastor and teacher, it is strictly necessary for the competent Old Testament exegete to be well versed in Hebrew and Aramaic, and it is desirable that he should have furthermore a good introduction to other Semitic tongues. As for the New Testament exegete, while he must be at home in the Greek language, it is by no means a matter of indifference whether he has a mastery of the original languages of the Old Testament. In New Testament Greek there is a Semitic undertone. "Many grammatical forms, modes of speech, and ex-

pressions of the New Testament are capable of being understood only by one who is acquainted with the peculiarities of the Semitic languages" (Räbiger, Encyclopædia of Theology, II, 33). So important a part of the New Testament oracles as the discourses of Jesus is implicated with a Semitic tongue; for, though reported in Greek, these discourses were spoken in Aramaic, and a probable conjecture as to the original form may evidently serve a good purpose in connection with one and another phrase or sentence.

2. Biblical Archæology is the science of Biblical antiquities. As the term has commonly been employed, archæology stands in contrast with history proper as being more occupied with products than with processes. It describes the theater and sets forth the fixed memorials of a people's life, and thus provides materials for the history which gives a connected picture of the progress of a people through successive developments and fortunes. Broadly construed, Biblical Archæology includes matters of geography; of climate and physical conformation; of animal and vegetable life; of manners, customs, and industries; of domestic, political, and religious institutions, and of arts and sciences. It treats of these

matters more especially in relation to the Hebrew nation; but it falls within its province also to take account of the customs and institutions of other peoples in so far as they influenced Hebrew thought and life. In this view it would evidently need to award a considerable reference to the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Assyrian, the Greek, and the Roman civilizations.

3. It is the office of Canonics to set forth the facts relative to the formation of those collections of sacred books which we call the Old and the New Testament respectively; also to state principles which may enable us to judge whether any writing should be excluded from these collections or any outside writing be admitted thereto. Practically the canon may be fixed on account of the indisposition of any considerable party to make a move either for excision or inclusion. But in point of theory Christian society has the perpetual right to review the canon and to take action upon the question of revising its limits. It is important that each generation by expenditure of judicial investigation should gain the basis of an intelligent conviction on the subject.

4. Textual Criticism (otherwise described

as the Lower Criticism) attempts by a comparison of the oldest manuscripts, by a review of citations in ancient authors, and by an examination of ancient versions, to determine as far as possible the original text of the canonical books. Its task is one which can be well executed only through immense patience and knowledge of details.

Literary and Historical Criticism is occupied with the investigation of the Biblical books for the purpose of ascertaining as nearly as may be their authorship, their date, their relation to other writings, whether inside or outside the canon, the degree of their historical trustworthiness, and the special stage which any one of them may represent in the development of Biblical religion. In contrast with Textual Criticism this order of investigation has been styled the "Higher Criticism." The terms "lower" and "higher" are not very happily chosen, but may be tolerated with the understanding that the one denotes the primary stage of critical procedure, and the other is indicative of completing stages. In popular usage Higher Criticism is often made to stand for a special set of critical conclusions, prominent among which are the composite authorship of the Pentateuch and the relatively late

date of some of its principal constituents, the plural authorship of Isaiah, and the post-exilian origin of the Book of Daniel. But such usage is evidently counter to the demands of a precise terminology. Conclusions change. Critical procedure, on the other hand, is a constant demand of Biblical scholarship. It must perpetually be brought into requisition, whatever order of conclusions may be reached; for sound intelligence will not consent to rest upon fiat or mere custom, but will ever maintain its right and duty to examine into the grounds of that which is offered to its acceptance. If distinctions must be made in view of the type of conclusions reached, it will suffice to put conservative criticism in contrast with radical or progressive criticism. To retain a consistent meaning for Higher Criticism it should be made to cover all scientific effort to form a true theory of the origin of the books of the Bible and of their place and significance severally in the unfoldment of the Biblical religion.

Candor, reverence, a faculty for perspective, and judicial discrimination are prime demands for the Biblical critic. His path runs between sins of intemperate conservatism and sins of intemperate radicalism, and it is easy to swerve

to one side or the other. As for the student in process of forming his convictions, he needs to cultivate patience and openness of mind, avoiding at once a blind tenacity in holding on to old views and rashness in committing himself to new. If at any time he is tempted to be disturbed by the findings of criticism he should fortify his confidence by contemplating the immeasurable wealth of ethical and religious truth in the Bible. "To theological students," says Philip Schaff, "I would give the advice as the best safeguard against skepticism to master first and last the contents of the Bible, and never to lose sight of its spiritual truths, which are immeasurably more important than all the questions of lower and higher criticism." (Theological Propædeutic, p. 184.)

5. Biblical Introduction is naturally mentioned in close connection with Literary and Historical Criticism. The fruits of that criticism enter into its appropriate matter. Indeed, in characterizing the task of the one we have named the principal themes of the other. Introduction falls into two main divisions, since there are points of description which apply to the Old Testament group of writings as a whole, and others that are pertinent to the

New Testament. In the proper execution of its function it serves as a propædeutic to the study of each Testament, and also of the individual books of each. The limits within which it should be confined are not very distinctly marked; but evidently it can not deal at length with the subject-matter of the Biblical books without trenching on the province of other theological branches.

6. Hermeneutics lays down the general principles which should govern interpretation. Among the foremost of these are the following: (1) Primary respect is to be paid to the meaning of the words in a given passage and to the grammatical construction. While some concession may be made to the idea of a typical, mystical, or allegorical sense in the Scripture, the demand should not be overlooked for great caution and discrimination in dealing with this element. (2) Interpretation should carefully regard the context, take note of parallel passages, and make distinct account of the place which the given passage occupies in the progress of revelation. (3) Interpretation should have respect to the class of writings to which a given composition belongs, awarding due recognition to the presumption that the distinctive peculiarities of the class will ap-

pear with greater or less fullness in the individual specimen. (4) Interpretation should be sympathetic with the standpoint of an author, and should proceed on the basis of the best possible insight into his intellectual and emotional modes and his literary peculiarities.

7. Exegesis utilizes the contributions of all the aforementioned branches in the great task of a detailed interpretation of the Bible. So large is the ground to be covered, and so great is the variety of literature in the Bible, that no one exegete is likely to be a competent master in the whole field. The well-qualified interpreter is the one who, after being schooled to a good degree in the whole Bible, has taken time and pains to make himself an expert on some particular portion. This fact affords an obvious rule for the selection of commentaries.

CHAPTER IV

Historical Theology

In its Biblical part Historical Theology includes the following main divisions: Old Testament History, the Life of Christ, the History of the Apostolic Age, Biblical Theology of the Old Testament, and Biblical Theology of the New Testament. Etymologically considered "Biblical Theology" might denote other than a historical branch. It might be taken as substantially identical with Biblical Dogmatics, and thus signify an organic or systematized presentation of doctrine on the basis of inductions from the sum total of Biblical data. But in common usage Biblical Theology has very decided historical associations. It is actually treated as the history of doctrine within Biblical limits, its object being to set forth the genesis of doctrine and its movement through the various stages which may be dis-

cerned in the Old and New Testaments respectively.

The canons for the treatment of Biblical history are substantially the same as those for dealing with historical matters generally. It should be remembered, however, that it only harmonizes with the true historic method to acknowledge extraordinary elements in Biblical history, should good evidence appear for their reality. While positive dogmatic presuppositions are not to be read into the Biblical narratives, no more is matter to be read out of those narratives on the score of negative dogmatic presuppositions, such as the non-occurrence of divine interventions in the course of human history. It is fair to ask the extraordinary or miraculous to give a good account of itself, and to submit to certain tests of credibility; but to exclude it by a sweeping speculative dictum in no wise savors of historical method. To resort to sheer dogmatism on the one side or the other is doubtless the easier course; but the historic spirit is patient and shy of over-large conclusions. If it finds evidence of legendary accretions in the Bible it will accept the fact, but will not on that account stamp as unhistorical supernatural manifestations in general. It is not

to be overlooked that even a legend may serve to convey a religious lesson, and that a religion which is solidly based in history may yet have a certain fringe of legendary representations in its sacred oracles. No one doubts that there is a real biography of Luther, even should it be concluded that the story of his ink-bottle salute to the devil and some other items may have a legendary cast. In like manner a sprinkling of legendary matter in some portions of the Bible would afford no valid occasion to doubt that the Bible contains a real history of the Kingdom of God in the world.

The post-Biblical part of Historical Theology falls into two main divisions, namely, General Church History and the History of Christian Doctrine. The latter, it is true, is not logically excluded from the former. General Church History must give some account of doctrinal developments. But the subject-matter on the doctrinal side of Christian history is so immense that its detailed treatment is very properly assigned to a distinct branch.

How many subdivisions shall be made of General Church History is very largely an optional matter. In dealing with so wide an area it is of course easy to mark off many

provinces. One can devote special consideration to the earlier stages of Christian history under the name of the History of the Early Church, Patristics, Christian Archæology, or Christian Antiquities — an enumeration in which the first term stands for the comprehensive narrative; the second, for an account of the lives and writings of the fathers (usually of the first six centuries); and the third and fourth, for a systematic presentation of monumental and documentary evidence on the art, institutions, rites, customs, and characteristic modes of thought and feeling in the early Christian community. Mediæval and modern developments may in like manner be set apart for distinct treatment. Such themes as missions, polity, discipline, worship, and art make suitable subjects for a special historical consideration. Statistical summaries which serve as an index of progress or decadence in religion and morals serve also a good purpose. None of these themes should be excluded from the general treatise; but it fulfills a useful end to supplement the general treatise with monographs which attempt a minute representation of particular topics.

In a judicious management of Church History careful attention will be given to the

need of a just balance between the individual and the general, between the chronicle of events and the delineation of the inner life of the people. While the importance of getting at general laws and tendencies will not be overlooked, it will be recognized that the personal factor counts for not a little. While great public events and the transactions in high official station will not be neglected, due attention will be given to the fact that the genius of Christianity and the beneficent results of its true enthronement are quite as well illustrated in less conspicuous lines—in the tenor of domestic life, in social amelioration, in the kind of moral leaven infused into literature, and in the measure of practical endeavor to alleviate suffering and to promote every form of human well-being.

In connection with the History of Christian Doctrine there is less occasion for subdivision than obtains in relation to General Church History. The most important subsidiary branch of the former passes under the name of Symbolics, by which is denoted the treatise on the creeds representative of different Christian communions. One may indeed treat the creeds of Christendom as a basis for dogmatic or polemical disquisition; but primarily they are

matter for historical consideration. Symbolics finds its most appropriate place in association with the History of Christian Doctrine.

Among the branches auxiliary to Historical Theology may be mentioned the general histories of the nations which have served as the field of Christianity, and also the histories of the more important non-Christian religions. To the History of Christian Doctrine a specially important auxiliary is the History of Philosophy. From its first days down to the present doctrinal construction has been to a noticeable extent implicated with philosophical speculation.

CHAPTER V

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theology has for its office the orderly presentation and justification of the whole body of teachings or beliefs which belong to the Christian religion. Its principal divisions are Apologetics, Christian Dogmatics, and Christian Ethics. The second of these divisions, as being the central and most inclusive branch of Systematic Theology, is sometimes presented under that name. Besides the divisions named, mention might be made of Biblical Dogmatics. But the demand for such a branch in addition to Biblical Theology and Christian Dogmatics is scarcely imperative; for the former of these two presents ready means for estimating the tenor of Biblical teaching on all important lines of inquiry, and the latter takes up all the data the Bible has to offer for the determination of dogmatic conclusions. If only a secondary demand exists for Biblical Dogmatics, still less

clearly is it incumbent upon us to reserve a distinct place for Polemics and Irenics. Every well-devised apologetic or dogmatic treatise must be at once polemical and irenical, repulsing either directly or indirectly conclusions opposite to those represented, and at the same time recognizing, in the spirit of candor, the points on which the favored system agrees with its rivals. Special junctures in religious history may indeed give fitting occasion to treatises predominantly polemical or predominantly irenical; but, in general, the theological curriculum is not to be regarded as suffering mutilation through the absence of such treatises.

A well-rounded system of Christian Dogmatics unavoidably incorporates not a little of apologetic matter. In the preliminary portions the general premises on which the given system builds need to be justified, in order that the claims of the system, as understood by its framer, may be set in their proper light. Also, in the unfoldment of the system occasion will arise to substantiate this or that conclusion as being rational as well as Christian. At the same time, in consideration of the largeness of the matter which enters into the defense of the essential content of Christianity, a branch

devoted specifically to the office of that defense serves a good purpose. As the terms just used suggest, Apologetics in its general signification is confined to the defense of the *essential content* of Christianity. Its work is to justify the Christian religion as a whole against anti-Christian and non-Christian rivals. An extended consideration of dogmatic details does not fall within its scope.

Christian Dogmatics claims a wide basis. It builds its structure upon written revelation, but not exclusively. Any form of evidence which can serve to legitimate doctrinal conviction is to be regarded as lying within its territory. It accordingly puts the whole of religious history, and especially of Christian history, under contribution. It freely avails itself also of scientific and philosophical data so far as they have any obvious bearing on its themes. While this much is to be claimed, it is to be acknowledged that there is occasion for considering what the law of due proportion requires as respects recourse to different fields of evidence. A system of Christian Dogmatics ought certainly to be permeated with the Biblical teaching. In the normal procedure historical and rational data will be employed rather to confirm and to supplement

that teaching than to displace and to overshadow the same.

Stress is often placed upon the idea that Christian Dogmatics should bear a confessional character, that is, should reflect the doctrinal type of a particular Christian communion. Within limits this contention may be granted. The framer of a dogmatic system can not be expected to deny outright the prepossessions which belong to him as a member of a particular communion. Moreover, the demands of good manners and of good fellowship require him to keep aloof from needless antagonisms. At the same time the higher allegiance of a man is due to truth. The Christian dogmatist normally makes it his supreme aim to give an unbiased exposition of the Christian system. Unmitigated confessionalism is not likely to promote the scientific construction of Christian Doctrine.

As respects arrangement of the main themes of Christian Dogmatics, there is little chance to improve on the general plan which has long claimed the preference. The best arrangement is that which follows most nearly the line of logical succession. In the proper order of thought God is the presupposition of man. Man, the sinner, is the presupposition of the

advent of the Savior and of His work of redemption. This last is the presupposition of the realization of the kingdom of God in the individual and in the race. Accordingly after dealing, in an introductory division, with the grounds and sources of theology, we secure an appropriate order by making the principal themes to be, in succession, God, the Subjects of God's Moral Government, the Person and Work of Christ, and the Kingdom of Grace, or the Practical Realization of the Redemptive Purpose. The several divisions may be variously subdivided. The last-named includes not less than three great topics, namely, the Personal Appropriation of Salvation, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology.

In dealing with men as subjects of moral government and as candidates for citizenship in a divine kingdom, Christian Dogmatics enters the ethical domain. It falls within its province to depict the moral ideals to which Christians individually and collectively are obligated. However, on account of the extent of the field of ethical study, Christian Dogmatics may appropriately award thereto a somewhat general consideration, leaving the discussion of details to a special branch under the title of Christian Ethics. The term

"Christian" in this title serves as a means of distinguishing this branch from Philosophical Ethics. The two have not a little in common. The main distinction is that Christian Ethics has a specific historic basis, and makes its inductions in the light of the personal perfection and the authoritative teaching of Jesus Christ; while Philosophical Ethics obtains its standards more largely by reasoning from the idea of man. Conformity with the spirit of Christ is the goal to which the former looks; realization of the idea of man is the goal which the latter sets forth. The two may be regarded as describing from different points of view the same ideal.

As has been indicated, Systematic Theology has an important auxiliary in the Philosophy of Religion. The office of the latter is to ascertain, on the basis of the sum total of religious manifestations in the world, the grounds and nature of the religious principle, and the essential characteristics of religion at its best. In so far as the inductions arrived at in this way accord with Christian premises and ideals, the Philosophy of Religion is evidently fitted to serve as an ally of Christian Dogmatics, and also of Christian Apologetics and Ethics.

CHAPTER VI

Practical Theology

Proceeding on the ground of the character and aims of the Christian religion as elucidated by the preceding divisions, Practical Theology considers the appropriate means and methods of bringing that religion to actual supremacy in the life of men. Its leading branches are Liturgics, Homiletics, and Pastoral Theology.

Liturgics treats not only of sacramental performances, but also of all those parts of the public worship which do not fall within the special domain of Homiletics. The ritual in which the congregation participates, the devotional reading of the Scriptures, public prayer, and the use of hymns and sacred music are themes which belong within its province. Furthermore, it treats of the order of exercises and the combination of factors best

adapted to give symmetry and perfection to the public service as a whole.

The office of Homiletics is to set forth the principles of effective religious discourse. It is essentially the science of preaching. According to the New Testament conception the special ambassador of Christ is eminently a prophet, a preacher, a minister of the Word. He is to be apt to teach. He is to know how to use the word of the Lord, so that in his hands it may be a quick and powerful instrument, as well as a means of healing and consolation. Homiletics aims to expound and to illustrate the conditions of this order of ministerial efficiency. It includes all principles and rules which may legitimately govern the construction and delivery of sermons.

Pastoral theology has to do with the work of the Christian minister as the shepherd of souls and the leader of religious society. Whatever pertains to the discreet fulfillment of the offices of religious counsel and consolation in relation to individuals and families falls within its scope. Equally it includes whatever bears upon the task of directing the organized efforts of a congregation or society on the various lines of religious and benevolent enterprise.

A number of branches may be specified which are subordinate to Pastoral Theology, or at least closely allied therewith. One of these grows out of the office of the Christian shepherd to bring the young into the fold of Christ, or more generally speaking, to prepare the immature, by instruction suited to their capacity, for taking upon themselves the responsibilities of the Christian profession. Corresponding to this function is the branch which bears the name of Catechetics. This has for its province the principles and rules which should govern the initial forms of religious tuition. Its successful treatment requires a keen understanding of the mental needs of the child, a sympathetic recognition of his limitations, and a ready apprehension of those ways of presenting truth which best minister to healthy feeling. In short, it takes considerable of an artist in religion to devise or to execute in ideal shape a catechetical scheme. No pastor should regard this task as belonging to an inferior range of ministerial activity. To get down among the children and to utilize the power of a genial and sympathetic intimacy with them for leading them into the ways of religion, will tax one's genius and skill quite as much as the effort to

soar into the highest realms of religious thinking.

Pastoral leadership implies evidently a considerable knowledge of ecclesiastical polity and discipline. At least the pastor can not with any propriety fail of a good acquaintance with the system of polity and discipline which obtains in his own communion; and of course an intelligent understanding of one system is furthered by a study of related and opposing systems. There is room, therefore, under Pastoral Theology for a branch which treats of Ecclesiastical Polity and Ecclesiastical Discipline (or Church Law), so far as is needful to promote intelligent administration.

As Christian enterprise transcends a local outlook, and makes nothing less than the world its field, the pastor and his congregation must take account of their relation to the wider sphere of evangelization. A place therefore is fitly provided in Practical Theology for a branch which treats of the obligations and methods of missionary labor. It might be termed the Theory of Missionary Work.

In recent years much has been said on the need of utilizing religion in the direction of social amelioration. The conviction has

gained ground that the religious teacher should investigate the great problems of the day relative to the temporal and moral conditions of the masses, and should be ready to apply to these problems such means of solution as are contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the Gospel teaching. Not a little may be conceded to this conviction. A question may indeed be raised as to what extent sociological study should be recognized in a theological curriculum. A full discussion of purely economic questions evidently has small claim to admission. But the viewpoint of Christian ethics is legitimately applied to all the relations of man with man. There is, therefore, a place in Practical Theology for a branch which aims not only to throw light on the proper ministration of charities, but also to serve as a guide to the pastor in his relation to other problems of a sociological order. Such a branch might be entitled Christian Sociology.

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